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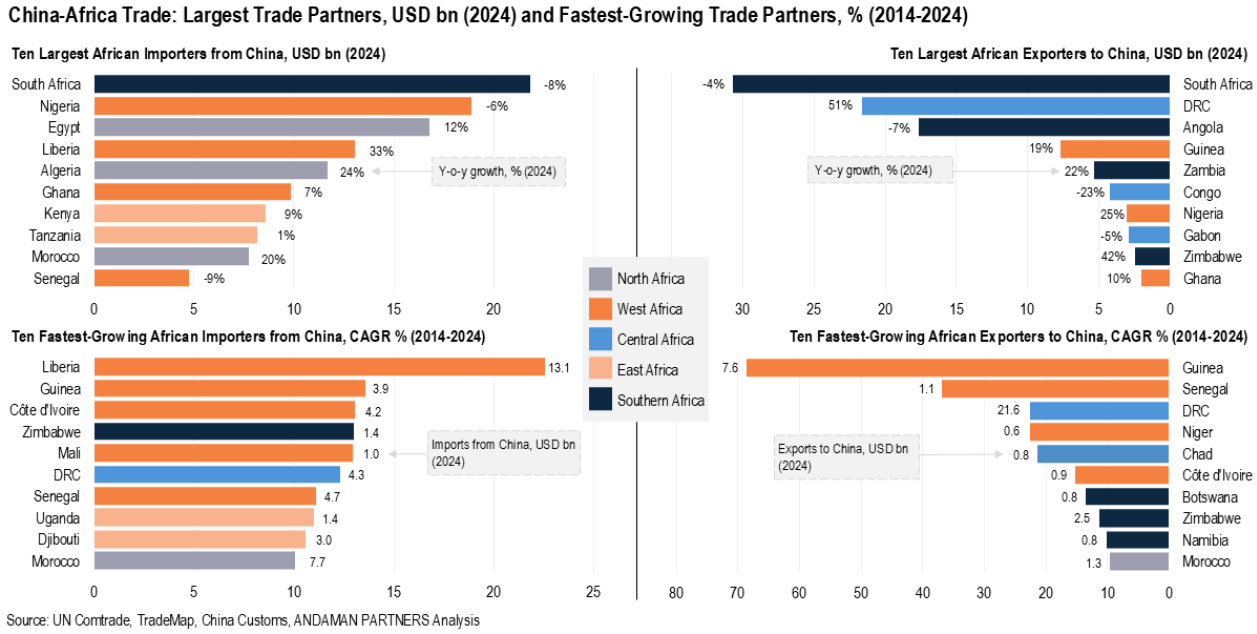
China-Africa Trade at a Glance: Demand Hubs and Supply Corridors

Size and speed: Who buys the most from China, who sells the most to China and whose trade is growing the fastest?



Source: UN Comtrade, TradeMap, China Customs, ANDAMAN PARTNERS Analysis

In 2024, China's exports to Africa totalled USD 171 billion, an increase of 4% year-on-year, and imports from Africa were USD 117 billion, up 6.8% year-on-year. Africa accounted for 4.8% of China's total exports and 4.5% of its imports.

From 2000 to 2024, China's exports to Africa increased by 16%, and imports from Africa increased by 15%. In the first half of 2025, China's exports to Africa already passed USD 100 billion, a year-on-year growth rate of 21.6%, while imports from Africa also increased, albeit by only 1.1% year-on-year.

Africa's largest importers from China are the continent's largest economies and diversified demand hubs, which mostly import machinery and electronics. In contrast, the largest exporters to China are hydrocarbon and mineral suppliers. In 2024, China's fastest-growing African trade partners skewed toward West Africa.

Imports from China

The largest African importers from China in 2024 were the continent's largest economies and diversified consumer and industrial markets (South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco), along with Kenya and Tanzania (among the top five economies in East Africa) and Ghana and Senegal (among the top five economies in West Africa).

The one outlier among the top ten importers was Liberia, whose imports from China over recent years have fluctuated greatly, with peaks and troughs ranging from -80% to 700%. In 2024, Liberia's imports from China were driven by construction machinery, cars, steel and ships. However, Liberia's trade data is inflated due to the country being one of the world's leading "flag-of-convenience" options (i.e., vessels register under a different country's flag to take advantage of regulatory and tax benefits).

Aside from Liberia, the fastest-growing African importers from China in 2024 were Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Exports to China

African exports to China in 2024 were dominated by economies providing hydrocarbons and minerals, namely South Africa (minerals/metals), the Democratic Republic of Congo (copper/cobalt), Angola (crude oil), Guinea (bauxite) and Zambia (copper).

The fastest-growing African exporters to China in 2024 were Guinea, Senegal (oilseeds/nuts), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger (oilseeds/crude oil) and Chad (crude oil). Also on the list of top ten exporters were Côte d'Ivoire (rubber/manganese ore/crude oil), Botswana (copper), Zimbabwe (platinum/gold/tobacco), Namibia (uranium ore/copper) and Morocco (copper).

Several African countries appeared on the top ten lists of both the fastest-growing imports from and exports to China, namely Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Morocco.

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